

POLICY POSITION

3. OFFSHORE ENERGY RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

America and the member states of the Southern Legislative Conference face a long-term need for greater self-sufficiency of energy supplies, and events of recent years have shown that our excessive dependence on imported energy presents a major threat to national security and the economic welfare of our citizens.

The United States is currently importing approximately one-third of its petroleum supplies--about the same percentage as in the 1973 oil crisis. Another serious energy shortage could cripple many of our states' businesses and industries like trucking, food processing, tourism and manufacturing, all of which are dependent upon reliable and reasonably priced fuel supplies.

Neither the development of new technologies to increase known energy resources nor the efficient use of traditional and renewable energy resources can adequately reduce our dependence on insecure and financially draining foreign energy supplies in the near term. Exploration and development of America's offshore energy resources will ensure a safe and secure domestic petroleum supply and lessen the possibility of an energy shortfall and the concomitant social and economic consequences which would be devastating to each of our states, threatening or eliminating jobs and interrupting vital fuel supplies.

Numerous federal laws have been enacted to regulate the pace of Outer Continental Shelf exploration, protect the environment and ensure that state coastal concerns are adequately met.

The Southern Legislative Conference supports the exploration and development of our offshore energy resources under stringent and rigidly enforced governmental regulations, and opposes legislative efforts to impose moratoria on offshore energy exploration and development.

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